

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4920

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 17841

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR PARA THREE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TGEN, SHUM, UR, US
SUBJECT: US-USSR S&T BILATERALS

REF: (A) MOSCOW 17758, (B) MOSCOW 11348, (C) MOSCOW
16895

1. SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION: THIS MESSAGE IS
INTENDED AS AN EMBASSY CONTRIBUTION TO THE GENERAL
REVIEW OF HIGH LEVEL VISITS AND FURTHER ACTIONS THE
US COULD TAKE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE S&T BILATERALS
IN RESPONSE TO THE RECENT TRIALS AND TO OTHER UNFAVORABL
DEVELOPMENTS IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS. THE EMBASSY
BELIEVES THAT BALANCED AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL SCIENCE
EXCHANGES CONTINUE TO HAVE AN IMPORTANT PLACE IN OUR
BILATERAL RELATIONS. HOWEVER, AS A MEANS OF SIGNALING
TO THE SOVIETS OUR CONCERN OVER THEIR RECENT ACTIONS
UPCOMING 1978 JCM'S COULD BE POSTPONED AND SOME ON-
GOING COOPERATIVE PROJECTS COULD BE ELIMINATED, WITH
LITTLE SUBSTANTIVE LOSS TO THE US. WE SUGGEST THAT
ON-GOING WASHINGTON REVIEW INCLUDE IDENTIFICATION FOR
POSSIBLE TERMINATION PROJECTS WHICH CHIEFLY BENEFIT THE
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SOVIETS, THEREBY IMPROVING THE OVERALL BALANCE OF THE
BILATERALS - WHICH IN THE LONG RUN WILL MAKE THEM
MORE VIABLE. END SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION.

2. THE SENTENCING OF SHCHARANSKIY ON THE THIRD
ANNIVERSARY OF THE APOLLO-SOYUZ MISSION WAS UNDOUBTEDLY
COINCIDENTAL. HOWEVER, IT NEVERTHELESS BRINGS SHARPLY

INTO QUESTION THE FUNDAMENTAL PREMISES OF BILATERAL SCIENCE COOPERATION. THE CANCELLATIONS OF THE CALIFANO, PRESS, BLUM AND SIMONS VISITS, AS WELL AS THE JULY 25 ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE DEPT SPOKESMAN THAT THE US IS UNDERTAKING A GENERAL REVIEW ON HIGH LEVEL EXCHANGE VISITS, WERE STRONG INDICATIONS OF US DISPLEASURE OVER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND OTHER PROBLEMS IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS. THE SOVIET REACTION IN BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC COMMENTS HAS BEEN ABOUT THE MINIMUM THAT COULD BE EXPECTED (REF A). NUMEROUS EXCHANGEES IN RECENT WEEKS HAVE TOLD US THEIR SOVIET HOSTS AT ALL LEVELS HAVE EXPRESSED STRONG CONCERN ABOUT THE FUTURE OF US/SOVIET COOPERATION. THE SOVIETS ARE EVIDENTLY HOPING THE US WILL REST CONTENT WITH SYMBOLIC ACTIONS THAT DO NOT SUBSTANTIALLY AFFECT ON-GOING SCIENCE EXCHANGES, IN WHICH THEY PERCEIVE CONSIDERABLE ADVANTAGE. THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH THE 1976 CANCELLATIONS OF THE ENERGY AND HOUSING AGREEMENT JCMS (IN PROTEST OVER SOVIET ADVENTURISM IN ANGOLA) WOULD TEND TO ENCOURAGE THEIR BELIEF THAT WE WILL BE BACK TO "BUSINESS AS USUAL" SHORTLY. IF NO FURTHER ACTIONS THROUGH THE BILATERALS ARE UNDERTAKEN, THE FORCE OF OUR PROTEST WILL BE WEAKENED IN SOVIET EYES.

3. IN LINE WITH THE "GENERAL REVIEW" OF HIGH LEVEL VISITS, THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT WE BE
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PREPARED TO POSTPONE ALL JCMS SCHEDULED FOR THE REST OF 1978, EITHER IN THE US OR THE USSR, IF THERE IS NO SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS IN THE INTERIM. IN ADDITION, SELECTIVE CUTS IN ON-GOING COOPERATIVE PROJECTS OF MARGINAL VALUE TO THE US SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN AS A FURTHER MESSAGE TO THE SOVIETS THAT WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND OTHER PROBLEMS AFFECTING US-SOVIET RELATIONS. RECOGNIZING THAT OTHER AND BETTER CANDIDATES FOR ELIMINATION MAY BE SELECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE TECHNICAL AGENCIES, WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS, WHICH ARE EITHER OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO THE SOVIETS OR CANCELLATION OF WHICH WOULD SIGNAL US RESOLVE TO SEEK MAJOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE CONDUCT OF THE BILATERALS.

-- SHUTTLE-SALYUT - THIS PROJECT IS OF HIGH TECHNICAL AND POLITICAL INTEREST TO THE SOVIETS - A POINT REINFORCED BY THE RECENT KOLBASOV ARTICLE CARRIED IN TASS PUBLICLY EXTOLLING THE DESIRABILITY OF SHUTTLE-SALYUT. IN THE PRESENT CLIMATE CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF SUCH A VISIBLE AND SYMBOLIC EXAMPLE OF COOPERATION AS SHUTTLE-SALYUT IS CLEARLY INAPPROPRIATE.

(THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT THE TECHNICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR SHUTTLE-SALYUT HAS ERODED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDEPENDENT US CAPABILITY TO PERFORM EXPERIMENTS IN WHICH A SALYUT-TYPE SPACECRAFT IS NEEDED.)

-- APPLICATION OF COMPUTERS TO MANAGEMENT - THIS WORKING GROUP IS OF INTEREST TO THE SOVIETS BECAUSE OF THEIR LAG IN COMPUTERS AND ITS DIRECT APPLICABILITY TO HIGH PRIORITY SOVIET PROGRAMS FOR UPGRADING ECONOMIC PLANNING AND ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT. THIS WORKING

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GROUP IS HIGHLY ACTIVE AND ITS CANCELLATION WOULD COUNTERACT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE US IS JUST CLEARING OUT DEAD WOOD. SHCHARANSKIY'S BACKGROUND AS A COMPUTER SPECIALIST MAKES THIS AN ESPECIALLY INAPPROPRIATE COOPERATIVE ACTIVITY AT THE PRESENT TIME.

-- CORROSION - THIS WAS TO BE INCLUDED AS A NEW WORKING GROUP AT THE CANCELLED S&T JCM. SOVIETS HAVE EXPRESSED STRONG INTEREST IN GETTING COOPERATIVE ACTIVITY UNDERWAY, HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE NOW BECAUSE OF GENERAL BAN AGAINST INITIATING NEW AREAS OF COOPERATION AND BECAUSE OF THE OFFENSIVE LETTER WHICH THE PROSPECTIVE SOVIET COCHAIRMAN, KOLOTYRKIN, PUBLISHED APPLAUDING THE ORLOV CONVICTION (REF B).

-- S&T INFORMATION - THIS WORKING GROUP HAS BEEN MORIBUND BECAUSE OF SOVIET UNWILLINGNESS TO EXCHANGE

INFORMATION AND OR EVEN TO PROVIDE US WITH REGULATIONS
GOVERNING RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO FOREIGNERS. ITS
TERMINATION WILL SHOW THE SOVIETS THAT WE NO LONGER
INTEND TO CONTINUE UNPRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY AND SHOULD
SIGNAL A NEW TOUGHNESS TOWARD THE QUESTION OF BALANCE
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IN EXX WITHIN THE BILATERAL
AGREEMENT AS A WHOLE.

-- ENERGY FORECASTING - SOVIETS ARE CONTINUING TO STALL
ON RELEASE OF INFORMATION IN THIS WORKING GROUP (REF C).
AND IN VIEW OF EMPHASIS DEPUTY SECRETARY O'LEARY
PLACED ON ENERGY FORECASTING AT LAST ENERGY
JCM, ITS CANCELLATION BY THE US WILL SIGNAL TO THE
SOVIETS THAT WE ARE CALLING INTO QUESTION THE ENTIRE
ENERGY AGREEMENT.

-- SOLAR ENERGY AND GEOTHERMAL - SOVIETS HAVE LITTLE
OF TECHNICAL INTEREST TO US IN THESE FIELDS. WE HAVE
EXPERIENCED ACCESS DIFFICULTIES AND UNEXPLAINED
DELEGATION CANCELLATIONS IN THESE WORKING GROUPS,
AND THEIR CANCELLATION WOULD SHOW OUR RESOLVE NOT
TO TOLERATE SUCH BEHAVIOR IN THE FUTURE. TOON

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